

Report to Cabinet

16 October 2024

Subject:	Performance Management Framework – 2024/25 Quarter 1 Monitoring
Cabinet Member:	Leader, Cllr Kerrie Carmichael
Director:	Assistant Chief Executive – James McLaughlin
Key Decision:	No
Contact Officer:	Kayleigh Walker – Senior Lead: Service Improvement Sarah Sprung – Senior Lead: Service Improvement

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That Cabinet receive progress on the further development of the Corporate Performance Management Framework and approve the 2024/25 Quarter 1 monitoring reports;
- 1.2 That Cabinet approve the targets for all Corporate Performance Indicators set out in Appendix 3 to this report;
- 1.3 That Cabinet receive and approve the changes to the event related Performance Indicators, set out in Appendix 4 to this report.

2. Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 The Council approved a Corporate Performance Management Framework (PMF) on 12 April 2022, to address the recommendations of the Governance Value for Money Review by Grant Thornton and as a key element of the Council's Improvement Plan. Since then, the corporate PMF has been further refined and built into business processes and in March 2024, the Council was given notice by the former Department for Levelling up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) that the period of statutory intervention would end on 22 March 2024. The sustained improvements and impetus of recent years made this the right time to develop a new Council Plan that would take the organisation forward from being brilliant at the basics to being an outstanding Council.

2.2 The new Council Plan was approved by Council on 23 July 2024. The strategic themes in the new Council Plan are: -

- Growing up in Sandwell
- Living in Sandwell
- Healthy in Sandwell
- Thriving Economy in Sandwell

All underpinned by One Council One Team

2.3 The refreshed Council Plan is structured simply, focusing on evidence, outcomes and measures that will enable clear monitoring and tracking of progress.

2.4 Performance measures have been aligned against the outcomes under each strategic theme, which, along with the updates to the business plan actions, will allow the Council to understand if it is delivering against the Council Plan.

2.5 A two-tiered approach to performance measures has also been developed:

1. Council measures that are within the gift of the Council and that it can set a meaningful and ambitious target for. In total there are 174 of these measures.
2. Contextual measures that are important for the Council to monitor but are not solely influenced by the Council and that it would not set a target for. In total there are 37 of these measures.

2.6 Examples of contextual measures are 'the overall crime rate' and 'infant mortality'. By monitoring these contextual measures, over time the authority can understand if the activity undertaken by the Council is having an impact or 'shifting the dial'.

- 2.7 This report sets out the Council’s performance against the Corporate Performance Indicators for Q1 of 2024/25 (Appendix 1) and progress against Business Plan actions that contribute towards delivering the Council Plan (Appendix 2). Also attached as Appendix 3 is a document setting out the targets for all the Corporate Performance Indicators, including profiled targets throughout the year and background information where relevant.
- 2.8 Performance of key contracts is included in the quarterly performance reports to provide oversight of the performance of these services and assurance that contract management mechanisms continue to be in place and effective (see paragraph 11).
- 2.9 The information collected is used to enable the authority to better understand the impact of its work on local people, and where necessary, target actions and resources.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Council Plan?

Growing Up in Sandwell	The corporate PMF includes measures under all strategic themes in the Council Plan to monitor progress in these key areas. The PMF also includes elements that measure the council’s use of its resources to ensure delivery of the strategic objectives.
Living in Sandwell	
Thriving Economy in Sandwell	
Healthy in Sandwell	
One Council One Team	

4. Quarter 1 Corporate Performance Report – key messages

Corporate Performance Indicators

- 4.1 There are 116 quarterly measures (excluding contextual measures). For Q1, the breakdown is as follows.
- 18 PIs (15.5%) are RAG rated ‘red’
 - 22 PIs (19%) are rated ‘amber’
 - 46 PIs (39.7%) are rated ‘green’

- 30 PIs (25.9%) have no RAG rating or there was no outturn available this quarter.

4.3 There is also one annual PI included in the report this quarter under the Thriving theme, that is rated 'red'. It has been included in this report because the information has become available.

4.4. The highest number of 'red' PIs are under the Living Strategic theme (6), all of which relate to housing and of these, 4 are Housing Compliance PIs, and under the One Council One Team Strategic theme (8).

Council Plan

4.5 In total 85% of all actions in Assistant Director Business Plans are on track, with only 9.5% of actions experiencing delays. A further 2.4% of actions have not been started but this is in line with expectation, with work expected to start in Q2 for many of them.

4.6 Of those actions delayed, the majority sit within the Thriving Economy in Sandwell Theme and in One Council One Team.

4.7 The delayed actions in Thriving Economy generally relate to areas in which factors external to the council are impacting upon progress. Commentary for each of these actions can be found in Appendix 2.

4.8 The delayed actions within the One Council One Team theme broadly relate to internal capacity issues and delays as a result of pushing back the go live date for Oracle Fusion. Again, full details can be found in Appendix 2.

5. Our achievements in Q1

- 5.1 Sandwell Council's Public Health team are helping children to get the best start in life by promoting Healthy Start vitamins that are free to all young children and expectant mothers. Local health visitors and community midwives in Sandwell are offering free Healthy Start vitamin drops to all children from the age of four weeks until their fourth birthday.
- 5.2 Performance for the Number of Businesses Supported is 183 and the number of Businesses receiving Financial Assistance or Grants is 21 in Q1: both significantly above target. In November 2023 the Think Sandwell Team formally re-branded to the Sandwell Business Growth Team and launched the Sandwell Business Growth Plan. The plan has seen the Sandwell Business Growth Team establish the Sandwell Business Support offer through re-designing the business customer journey. This has comprised a new website, a customer charter, and new ways for businesses to contact and engage with the team. The team have also hosted more in person business events and workshops to showcase the support available. The increase in events has been made possible through funding, and also through the opening of the Sandwell Start-Up Hub at Jack Judge House. These events also provide good news stories which have been communicated online and via newsletters, promoting the business support offer. The number of monthly customers has built up steadily as more people became aware of the range of guidance and support and training options being provided.
- 5.3 A project which has helped more Sandwell residents get confident online by providing 1,200 Chromebooks, 400 laptops and training on how to use them has won the Adult Learner Award for Digital Inclusion at the West Midlands Combined Authority Adult Learner Awards. Two Sandwell Council teams – the Sandwell Adult and Family Learning Service (SAFL) and Digital Inclusion Team – were recognised for the outstanding support they offer to residents to improve their digital skills and job prospects.
- 5.4 On 17 July 2024, as part of Operation CeCe, Sandwell Council Trading Standards, in partnership with the Modern Slavery Team, General Licensing Department and West Midlands Police, conducted three raids

across the borough. Over £120,000 worth of illegal goods were confiscated during the operation.

5.5 Family Hubs offer services and support for all families in Sandwell with children aged 0 – 19 (or 25 with SEND) and extra support is available for families during pregnancy and in a baby's first years. As part of the programme, the DfE confirmed we are the only authority to have a mobile spoke, since this started in January 2024, we have seen 1811 people. In addition:

- 165 parent / carers have accessed a parenting programme in the last 12 months.
- 142 new birth wellbeing contacts completed and 462 wellbeing contacts for babies aged 3 to 6 months
- The extended Breast-Feeding Network contract commenced April 2024 and they completed 50 home visits in quarter 1.

5.6 ASC have been exploring innovations in future service design and delivery through 3 pilot projects. These include AskSARA, The Virtual House and Magic Notes.

5.7 AskSARA is an online self-assessment tool designed to help individuals assess their needs and find solutions to support independent living. By integrating AskSARA into our ASC service delivery model, we can empower service users to identify their support requirements, access relevant information and resources, and make informed decisions about their care and support needs. This innovative approach will enhance service user engagement, improve efficiency in care delivery, and optimize resource allocation within Sandwell.

5.8 The Virtual House uses immersive virtual reality (VR) technology to create realistic simulations of home environments. The Virtual house gives people a virtual guided tour of a typical property and enables them to research and understand the types of assisted living support that is available. The Virtual house can also assist staff, to gain a better understanding as to what is available and staff can use the Virtual house with Service users when conducting i.e. assessments. The Virtual house provides links to the places where the items contained within the house can be obtained.

5.9 Magic Notes is an Artificial intelligence solution that cuts down the administrative burden that currently faces social work teams within adult social care. It is a voice recognition and transcription tool, which uses advanced voice recognition technology to transcribe spoken word into text. This text can then be uploaded to systems, saving time instead of doing it the traditional way of typing up notes. The system is said to be 96% accurate when converting speech to text. This also can reduce the errors that can typically happen when manually note taking.

6. Performance Monitoring Areas for Improvement – Growing Up in Sandwell

6.1 There are no 'red' PIs in Q1 for this Strategic theme. The following PIs were amber this quarter and were 'amber' or 'red' last quarter.

6.2 'Rate of Children on a Child Protection Plan at period end (Rate per 10,000)': The number of Children on a Child Protection Plan continues to reduce for the 5th consecutive month from 526 in January 2024 to 440 this month, now at a rate of 51.3 per 10,000 against a target of 45, slightly below the Statistical Neighbour Average (51.7). The number of children subject to Child Protection plans are being monitored closely by both the operational teams and safeguarding unit.

6.3 'Rate of Children in Care at period end (Rate per 10,000)': The number of children we care for has increased from 808 to 831 over the last quarter, and higher than same period in the previous year (812). The current rate of children in our care is now at 96.8 against a target of 94, which is in line with the Statistical Neighbour Average of 96.7 (updated March 2024). There has been an increase of number of unaccompanied minors in care since June 2023 from 20 to 45 as of end June 2024 (excluding Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children the rate would be 786 – 91.6 per 10,000). There are fewer children entering care than statistical neighbours and other authorities in the West Midlands, but equally there are fewer children leaving care than statistical neighbours and other authorities in the West Midlands.

6.4 To address this, we have initiated a focused project on Exit from Care to address a specific group of children needing Special Guardianship Order

(SGO) assessments and discharge applications. This project has been effective in transitioning children out of care, and work is continuing. We have also completed a review of the structures for Children We Care For (and Care Experienced Young People). As a result, we plan to implement a new structure starting in October this year, which includes the establishment of an Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) hub to streamline the assessment and response for new arrivals.

- 6.5 ‘% of CYP that have had 3 or more placement moves in the last 12 months’ is 11.7% against a target of 9%. Not all placement moves are negative; a recent thematic QA review, which found that of the children who experienced placement moves in Q4 2023/24, 64% were evaluated to have had positive moves. As we work towards exiting more children from care, some are positively moving to live with parents or family members as part of their discharge plan. These positive moves aligned with effective care planning.
- 6.6 For some children, care arrangements do break down, which can be due to the child’s needs or changes in the caregiver’s situation, such as retirement, illness, or other factors. To address this, we have partnered with SMBC and Barnardo’s to develop an Emotional and Mental Health and Wellbeing Hub. One of the key focus areas of this project is supporting children who have experienced a breakdown in care arrangements, with the aim of providing stability. We’ve also integrated this project with our existing Family Solutions Team (FST), which supports stability. Additionally, we’ve emphasized the importance of early Stability Meetings as a multi-agency approach with carers, parents, and others to assess and provide the necessary support to prevent breakdowns in care arrangements.
- 6.7 In addition, the BERRI tool is part of a separate initiative under the 'Step Aside Project.' This project is specifically designed to review the care needs of children and young people in residential care, with the goal of identifying those who can be safely and appropriately transitioned out of residential care. While this may result in a placement move, it is focused on effective care planning rather than stability.
- 6.8 ‘Out of the total number of open Single Assessments, the percentage of assessments completed within 45 working days’ is 82.7% against the

target of 85%. 307 of 371 assessments were in timescale. Of those that were out of timescale, 54 were due to Social Worker Availability (84%). This was because of staff absence, vacancies and individual social workers' performance. Delays were also noted due to managers requiring additional work to meet quality assurance standards.

7.0 Performance Monitoring Areas for Improvement – Living in Sandwell

7.1 There are 6 'red' PIs under this strategic theme in Q1. These are as follows:

7.2 '% of responsive repairs completed in timescale' was 88.82% for emergency repairs and 71.49% for non-emergency repairs, against a target of 95%. Since seconding employees from the Voids teams in late April, year to date performance on emergency repairs has increased by around one percentage point over the last quarter to (from 87.25%), the month of June in isolation is up to 90.66%. This is a focus of the Housing Transformation Programme and performance is expected to improve further in Q2.

- 7.3 'Number of long-term empty homes brought into use' is 8 against a target of 10 for Q1. The outturn fell slightly short of target due to a number of those brought back into use being long standing complex cases (spanning 3 years). The team have an additional 135 in progress at various stages, so we expect this number to increase and recover in line with target by the end of Quarter 2.
- 7.4 'Housing Compliance Health Check (Over 6 key areas): Gas safety checks' is 98.89% against a target of 100%. All non-compliant properties are in the legal access process where access is usually achieved once completed and performance against this measure should therefore improve. Currently 167 are out of date; these are all domestic properties. All communal assets are valid.
- 7.5 'Housing Compliance Health Check (Over 6 key areas): Fire safety checks' is at 89.73% against a target of 100%. There is a programme in place for Fire Risk Assessments to ensure compliance by March 2025. All high-risk assessments are in date at the end of July 2024. This measure has seen significant progress since March 2024 when it was recorded at 56.26%.
- 7.6 'Housing Compliance Health Check (Over 6 key areas) Asbestos safety checks' is 0% against a target of 100%. There are two surveys completed for Asbestos – the first to identify which buildings contain Asbestos, and the second the annual inspections of those buildings identified. The Council is compliant in terms of the first survey to identify buildings with asbestos. This performance measure reports against the second survey, which are the annual inspections. Whilst these were undertaken, there are no records, so they are shown as out of date. A programme of work is being put together to undertake these.

7.7 'Housing Compliance Health Check (Over 6 key areas): The percentage of properties with a domestic electrical installation condition report (DEICR) under 5 years old (or in legal resolution)' is at 95.19% against a target of 100%. An exercise is underway to determine which DEICR's are already completed, once complete any gaps will be addressed through a programme, which will improve performance for this measure. Like Gas, access is required into all homes, so a revised access process will be followed leading to legal intervention to gain access as required. Currently there are 1156 domestic and 147 communal assets which are non-compliant. This measure is not currently measured under the consumer standards.

8. Performance Monitoring Areas for Improvement – Healthy in Sandwell

8.1 There are 3 quarterly PIs rated as 'red' and one annual PI where the outturn was available this quarter which was rated as 'red' in Quarter 1 under this strategic theme.

8.2 'ASCOF 3D Proportion of people using social care who receive self-directed support, and those receiving direct payments' is 18% against a target of 22%. Performance is below target, this time last year and benchmarking stats. We have commenced a transformation project, with one strand looking at our Direct Payment pathways which will help us to ensure we are supporting citizens to purchase their own support. This includes the appointment of a consultancy to review our provision of Direct Payments to ensure that we support people to make informed choices around their provision of care. It is not anticipated that short-term performance in this area will improve, however, we should start to see an improvement in 12 -18 months when new practices are embedded.

8.3 'ASCOF 2A The proportion of people who received short-term services during the year - who previously were not receiving services - where no further request was made for ongoing support (Oflog)' was 50% against a target of 60%. Performance is below target, last quarter and benchmarking stats. We currently have a programme of work in progress to improve our internal and externally commissioned reablement services.

This includes providing more informal advice and support at the front door and having a strength-based approach in our conversations with customers so that we provide the services and interventions they need to

remain healthy and independent in their own homes. Improvements to performance should be seen the next 6-12 months.

- 8.4 'NHS Health Checks': The NHS Health Check contract is over two years (Feb 2023 - Feb 2025 + possible 1 year) with a target of 6,000 Health Checks per year. Performance for Q1 is 941 against a quarterly target of 1,500. Under the contract, all targets for year 1 and year 2 must be completed prior to any PBR being claimed. The overall target for the 2 years is 12,000 Health Checks. The underachieved target in 2023/24 was partially due to the delays in the installation of the Software system within GP clinical systems but also because of the more focused approach the Council has taken into Q1 2024/25, targeting those who are most in need of a health check rather than a wider approach. However, given the low levels of attendance, the focus will be widened so that more health checks can take place across the borough moving forwards and performance against this measure should therefore improve.
- 8.5 'Number of sites that are non-compliant with the National NO₂ air quality objective (40 ug/m³ per annum)' is 2 against a target of 0. This is an annual PI but the information is available in Q1 each year, so it has been included in the Q1 report. Benchmarking information will not be available until September 2024 at the earliest.
- 8.6 The two sites that exceeded the annual nitrogen dioxide air quality objective were Birmingham Road, Oldbury and Grafton Road, West Bromwich (next to All Saints Way, in West Bromwich). NO₂ is essentially a reflection of vehicle tail pipe emissions. Changes in traffic management were made in 2018 on Birmingham Road, Oldbury and a modelled speed reduction from 40 to 30mph on All Saints Way has been undertaken, but the gains from this were found to be very marginal. These two sites have generally bucked the overall downward trend in NO₂ emissions across Sandwell. This is likely due to specific local issues, that may have resulted in higher traffic volumes or more idling, or increases in the types of more polluting vehicles using these roads, e.g. HGVs which almost all are still diesel. It is expected that these levels will reduce beneath the National objective over the next few years, but this will be reviewed again next year. If levels continue to remain high, then options for any further action will be considered.
- 8.7 We are currently reviewing initiatives to further reduce NO₂ emissions generally from transport, which will be included in our Air Quality Action Plan 2025 – 2030. These initiatives will be subject to stakeholder and public consultation but examples include:

- Launch and implementation of the Auntie Duck schools education programme to raise awareness of air pollution and increase active travel
- Promotion and active enrolment of Schools across Sandwell in ModeShift STARS – which rewards schools who encourage and support children walking, cycling, scootering and using public transport to get to school.
- General promotion of active and sustainable travel in schools, workplaces and community organisations across the borough, from learning to ride sessions, bikeability, through to led rides and bicycle repair hubs.
- Air pollution awareness and behaviour change strategies being implemented and grant funded by the West Midlands Combined Authority, as part of the West Midlands Air Quality Framework – this includes the creation of a website hosting live air quality data for the West Midlands region.
- Continued support for the Black Country ULEV strategy to encourage the uptake of Electric Vehicles as opposed to replacement with petrol or diesel vehicles.
- Provision of walking and cycling maps for each of the six town to identify quiet routes to travel by foot or on a bicycle as an alternative to the car.

9. Performance Monitoring Areas for Improvement – Thriving Economy in Sandwell

- 9.1 There is 1 quarterly PI rated as ‘red’ in Quarter 1 under this strategic theme.
- 9.2 ‘Ratio of diesel to lower emission vehicles in fleet (Serco & Corporate)’ performance was 2.5% for the Council and 1.9% for Serco, against a target of 7.5%. Pending the completion of the Corporate Fleet Review, fleet replacements have necessarily slowed; as such movement towards this target will be limited in early 2024/25.

10. Performance Monitoring Areas for Improvement - One Council One Team

- 10.1 There are 8 quarterly PI rated as ‘red’ in Quarter 1 under this strategic theme.
- 10.2 ‘Number of days taken to process Housing Benefit New Claims’ performance is 33 days against a target of 22 days. There has been a decrease in performance due to the number of complex claims that are

received, which take longer to determine. The Council is seeing more of these complex claims as the rollout of universal credit has meant simpler claims are now picked up by the DWP. An example of complex claims are those that have discretionary decisions, where care, support or supervision is provided and administered by local authorities. These take a lot of time and resource to determine eligibility.

- 10.3 'SARs compliance with timescales' was 87% against a target of 95%. A breakdown by directorate is as follows: Assistant Chief Executive - 100% (2), People - 95% (44), Finance & Transformation - 75% (12), Place - 70% (13). The Council is working to increase the compliance rate and achieve the 95% target.
- 10.4 'FOI compliance with timescales' was 85% against a target of 95%. A breakdown by directorate is as follows: Assistant Chief Executive - 100% (18), Finance & Transformation - 98% (63), Place - 83% (133), People - 68% (53). Again, the Council is working to increase the compliance rate and achieve the 95% target.
- 10.5 'Variance from budget - Housing Revenue Account' was 1.5% against a target of 0%, translating to a £2,316,500 overspend for the HRA in Q1.
- 10.6 'Care experienced young people 19-21 in Employment, Education and Training (EET)' is below target at 41.5% against a target of 45.5% and has decreased slightly from 43.3% last quarter. 'Care experienced and Children in Care apprenticeships filled (borough wide)' and 'Care experienced and Children in Care apprenticeships filled (Council)' are also below target. There are many young people within the current cohort who cannot work due to personal circumstances. These include emotional health and wellbeing barriers and affordability. Some care experienced young people find that they are worse off if they undertake an apprenticeship since it is paid at minimum wage for their age. They are entitled to a bursary of £3000 but this is not a regular monthly income as it is paid at points within the duration of the apprenticeship. The £3000 also does not raise them to the real living wage.
- 10.7 Work is underway as part of the corporate parenting board strategy to improve Education, Employment and Training offers for our Young

People, including support for mental health and emotional well-being. This includes:

- Connexions have been working closely with the Employment and Skills team to early identify those due to leave care who do not have a current destination. These young people are then 'dual supported' to look at their options of further education, Higher Education, apprenticeships or employment opportunities.
- Officers from Employment and Skills continue to attend the METSEC building for workshops to showcase job opportunities and support applications.
- Corporate Parenting week due to take place between 9 – 13 September 2024, this will include an employability session which will be attended by young people and employers.
- Links have been made with staff at Coventry Council, who have developed bespoke approaches to help young people, including residential trips to develop confidence, and effective use of their Post 16 Advisor in their Virtual School. A visit to Coventry City Council took place in July to look at best practice sharing when working with NEET CEYP. Coventry's performance is around 10% higher than Sandwell's when it comes to 19-21 years old in education training or employment.
- Work continues to understand the multiple barriers to education and employment faced by children in care and care experienced young people. This includes mental health, which requires intensive support prior to referral to Skills and Employment Services. SCT are currently addressing this barrier with the launch of the emotional wellbeing hub delivered by Barnardo's which has funding until March 2025 'Bridging the Gap'.
- Further work is being undertaken to continue to build trust between our advisors and CEYP, including increasing confidence levels to apply for opportunities. Opportunities available currently outweigh the numbers of young people applying. There have been instances of young people being offered apprenticeship posts to turn them down on multiple occasions.
- Further 'Accelerate' courses are planned over the summer months to support transition arrangements from mandatory education to post-16 destinations and to increase confidence levels of the cohort.
- The Skills and Employment Strategy is currently being refreshed and has a strong emphasis on Youth Unemployment including Care

Experienced Young people. The Strategy encourages a multi-agency approach to the challenge with a shared responsibility to improve accessibility to opportunities.

- 10.8 Average working days lost per employee due to sickness absence (FTE) is 2.83 at the end of Q1, which is marginally better than the outturn for the same period last year. However, performance is below the target threshold of 2.24 days at the Q1 stage. Housing and Regeneration, within the Place directorate, and the Assistant Chief Executive's directorate have all seen an increase in sickness levels compared to the same period last year. Sickness absence summaries by directorate have been shared with the Executive Directors and the Assistant Chief Executive.
- 10.9 'Response rate for citizenspace consultations' is below target at 351 against a target of 750. The number of consultations differ each quarter depending on consultation activity taking place. Therefore, whilst we are below target for Q1, we are confident the year end target of 3,000 will be achieved.

11. Contract Governance

11.1 Reports on contract governance have been provided for Sandwell Children's Trust (SCT), Serco, Places Leisure and Sandwell Leisure Trust (SLT) and assurance of governance arrangements has been provided through these reports. A summary for each one is detailed below.

Sandwell Children's Trust (SCT)

11.2 Since April 2018, children's services have been delivered by Sandwell Children's Trust on behalf of the Council. The Trust delivers the following range of services:

- Children's Social Care
- Fostering
- Targeted Early Help

11.3 The contract with Sandwell Children's Trust has a comprehensive programme of governance arrangements. The contract requires that the Director of Children and Education, together with council senior officers from finance and legal services, and the Chief Executive of the Trust meet on at least a monthly basis to consider performance and operational matters. In addition, each quarter, the Lead Member for Children's Services and the Chief Executive of the council meet with the Chair of the SCT Board and the Chief Executive of SCT, at a Strategic Partnership Board.

11.4 The contract requires SCT to provide regular performance updates for consideration by the Operational Partnership Board, the Strategic Partnership Board and then by the Cabinet. Progress against the performance indicators, together with information about financial, workforce, and other performance areas is reported.

11.5 The composition of the Board of Sandwell Children's Trust is laid out in the Articles of Association. It includes a requirement to have two Council appointed non-executive directors (NEDs). It was previously agreed by Cabinet that one of these would be a member and the other an officer. The officer NED role was vacant, and in line with delegated powers, the Chief Executive has appointed the Assistant Director for Housing Management to this role.

- 11.6 Following a lengthy negotiation process a new set of contractual key performance indicators (KPI) have been agreed. The Trust commenced reporting against the new KPI's from the April 2024 reporting period. It was agreed that where KPI's were new i.e. had not previously been measured for contractual purposes, that a grace period of either 3 or 6 months would apply before the contractual measures in respect of performance failure will apply.
- 11.7 As highlighted in para 6.3, the total number of children in care, as of June 2024, is 831. This is an increase of 23 since the last quarter and an increase of 19 since the same period 12 months ago. Some of this increase is due to an increase in the number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) in Sandwell over the last 12 months. The rate per 10,000 of children in care in June is 96.8. This is a marginally worse position than June 2023, when the rate per 10,000 was 95.7.
- 11.8 As highlighted in para 6.2, the number of children on a child protection plan has decreased since last quarter with 440 children on a plan in June 2024 compared to 501 in December 2023. This translates to a rate per 10,000 of 51.3 in June 2024.
- 11.9 The contract sum, the funding provided to SCT to deliver the services detailed in the contract specification, is agreed annually. The Contract sum for 2024/25 was agreed by Cabinet and Full Council February 2024 as part of the Council's formal budget setting process. The contract sum for 2024/25 is £80.8m. This is an increase of £6.325m on 2023/24. The contract sum now includes additional funding for recruitment and retention that was agreed in-year in 2023/24, which was in addition to the £74.475m contract sum.
- 11.10 The projected outturn position for 2024/25 as of June is an overspend of £1,997k compared to the contract sum. In June 2023, 52 children were living in children's homes, since then the number has increased to 62 as of 2024. SCT are projecting an overspend on placements, against what they had budgeted, of £3.99m. Spend of placements is reason for the projected outturn overspend position.

11.11 In July 2023 Cabinet agreed a package of financial incentives to improve the recruitment and retention of social workers, this is collectively known as the Sandwell Deal. The initial impact of the Sandwell Deal has been reviewed. Since going live, the total number of permanent social workers has increased by almost 10%. Agency workers account for 17.9% of the total social worker cohort, which is 4.4% lower than 12 months ago.

Serco

11.12 The council's contract with Serco was awarded in 2010 and runs until 2035. It has a contract value in the region of £34m per annum. The contract covers services including waste and recycling collection, household recycling centre management, street cleansing and fleet management and renewal.

11.13 The contract has a set of regular meetings in place with standard agendas relating to the contractual requirements from key outcome targets (KOTs) to operational issues. These meetings are supported by regular cross channel communications between the SMB and Serco teams. Leadership Team also receive regular contract reports that provide oversight and issues are raised as appropriate.

11.14 The contract contains the requirement for the provision of regular data from the contractor to be provided, there is also an associated requirement for SMBC to provide information to Serco, relating to Council priorities annually and fleet maintenance through a set of KPIs. In addition, there is an integration with the Council's My Sandwell reporting tool.

11.15 Overall service performance in Q1 has been good, with fewer penalty points awarded than most quarters last year. Penalty points over a certain threshold result in a deduction from the contract payment.

11.16 The Council have successfully recruited a Waste Contract and Operations Manager to directly manage the Serco contract. The new post holder started on 1 August 2024.

Places Leisure

11.17 The Council has a 25-year contract with Places Leisure to operate West Bromwich Leisure centre. The contract is a Design, Build, Operate and

Maintain contract which ensured value for money by reducing design and build costs as well as ongoing maintenance liabilities.

11.18 Monthly operational reports are provided to update on performance, – operational and technical. Quarterly contract management meetings are held to ensure the ongoing monitoring of the contract and performance. These cover Operational Performance, Health and Wellbeing outputs and Customer Feedback.

11.19 In terms of Q1 participation, Places Leisure’s performance is returning to pre-pandemic levels. Participation levels are continuing to rise, and memberships are significantly above 2019/20. Only learn-to-swim numbers remain below pre-pandemic levels.

Current Year to Date Participation vs FY24 and FY20			
	<i>FY25</i>	<i>FY24</i>	<i>FY20</i>
April	36,477	34,239	39,911
May	38,667	36,924	38,520
June	37,504	37,815	37,968
Memberships at Q1 FY25 v FY24 & FY20			
<i>Membership</i>	<i>FY25</i>	<i>FY24</i>	<i>FY20</i>
Fitness Club Live	2,793	2,613	2,088
Swim Only	74	93	144
Learn to Swim	1,204	1,324	1,577
Basketball Club Live	30	54	16

11.20 Based upon projected operational, and therefore financial performance, a business plan was agreed for the duration of the contract. The business plan results in an annual management fee payment to the Council of circa £28K.

11.21 There is also a utility benchmarking arrangement included in the contract, whereby PL own the risk on consumption and the Council are liable for the risk on tariff. Pre-pandemic operations resulted in a net gain for the Council – Management Fee minus Utility Benchmarking Payment. This is calculated and paid at the end of each financial year. In 2022/23 the utility benchmark resulted in a payment from the Council to PL of £239k. Modelling for 2023/24 indicated that the utility benchmarking will require a payment from the Council to PL of £202k, however a recent estimate is circa. £127k.

Sandwell Leisure Trust (SLT)

11.22 Work continues between Council Officers, Bevan Brittan solicitors and SLT's solicitor to finalise the Deed of Variation (DoV) to the Management and Funding Agreement (MFA). This DoV will extend the termination and subsequent period of operation to 31 March 2027 and refine the partnership as agreed and signed on 13 July 2023. This position was confirmed by Cabinet on 18 October 2023.

11.23 In Q1, Sandwell Leisure Trust (SLT) managed the following leisure centres in Sandwell:

- Haden Hill Leisure Centre
- Hadley Stadium
- Harry Mitchell Leisure Centre
- Portway Lifestyle Centre
- Sandwell Aquatics Centre
- Tipton Leisure Centre
- Tipton Sports Academy
- Wednesbury Leisure Centre

11.24 With regards to operational performance, the headline figures are below. However, these are not directly comparable because of the swimming pools at Haden Hill Leisure Centre being closed for 2023/24 and the Langley and Smethwick swimming centres closing and Sandwell Aquatics centre opening over the summer 2023 (the offer was different for 2022/23). Also, as with effect from Q3 2023/24, concessionary memberships are no longer included due to their subsidy.

11.25 Headline figures for Q1 include:

- 628,857 attendances April – June 2024. **19.2%** up on Q1 FY24 (527,457)
- From June 2023 to June 2024, total memberships decreased by **3.2%**
- 5,962 enrolled on Learn to Swim (children) – **12.8%** up from Q1 FY24 (5,284)

11.26 Sport and Leisure, Public Health and SLT are working together to develop improved reporting for the free-swimming element as funded by Public

Health. Once agreed, some of the data will be included in future versions of the report.

- 11.27 At the time of drafting this report, SLT are in the process of finalising their 23/24 outturn. They have indicated that they will outturn to budget.
- 11.28 With regard to HR, the Apprentices Scheme has been launched for 2024/2025. SLT will be recruiting a total of 9 Apprentices overall (up from 3 last year). Eight of these will be in the role of Leisure Team Member and new for this year, one of the apprentices will be recruited to participate in the Community Activator Coach programme. This is aimed at dry sites and the learner will gain qualifications in coaching, gym instructor, sports, athletics and first aid.
- 11.29 Adverts for recruitment have been sent to 20 local schools and colleges and emailed to faith networks. There has been a good response so far with 28 suitable applications received across the full range of apprenticeships on offer and fitness testing took place on 3rd July 2024.

12. Strategic Risk Register

- 12.1 Effective risk management is a key element of good corporate governance, as noted in the council's [Code of Corporate Governance](#), and is essential to the overall performance of the council in meeting its council plan objectives. Good risk management will ensure that resources are used efficiently and effectively, and that assets and resources are protected against risk in the most efficient way.
- 12.2 The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) receive the Council's Strategic Risk Register (SRR) on a regular basis for review and comment. The role of the ARAC is to provide assurance to the Council that it has a system of governance, risk management and internal control in place and that the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements continue to inform decision making.
- 12.3 The SRR does not include all of the risks faced by the Council. Other risks are captured within directorate, programme and project risk registers in line with the Council's risk management framework. The latest SRR is

included as Appendix 5 and will be presented to ARAC in September 2024.

13 Implications

Resources:	There are no direct financial implications to this report.
Legal and Governance:	A corporate performance management framework was identified as a key gap in the council's governance arrangements by Grant Thornton in 2021. The establishment of the corporate performance management framework was a key action in the council's Improvement Plan agreed by Council in January 2022 and updated in June 2022. The PMF will enable officer and political leadership to improve oversight and corporate grip of the council's performance.
Risk:	Should the council not implement a robust performance management framework, then it will not have the corporate oversight and intelligence to inform decision making and effectively manage risks, which is key to service delivery and the achieving strategic objectives identified in the Council Plan. These risks and the associated mitigations are noted in the SRR.
Equality:	Equality measures are included in the PMF, under the One Council One Team Strategic Theme.
Health and Wellbeing:	The measures to track progress of the Council Plan include a series of health and wellbeing indicators. This enables the council's leadership to see at a high level the direction of travel of the borough's health and wellbeing and seek to continue good practice or identify mitigating actions to address issues.
Social Value:	Social value measures are included in the PMF
Climate Change:	There are measures related to Climate Change in the PMF, including Air Quality (Number of sites that are non-compliant with the National NO2 air quality objective) and a number of measures under the outcome 'Sandwell will be a net zero council by 2030 and a net zero borough by 2041'.

Corporate Parenting:	There is an outcome in the Council Plan under 'One Council One Team' for Corporate Parenting: 'An outstanding corporate parent, with all of the young people in our care reaching their full potential' and there are a number of Performance Indicators to measure this. There are also performance measures under 'Growing Up in Sandwell' that cover educational attainment of Children in care.
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14. Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Corporate Performance Indicators Q1 2024/25
- Appendix 2 – Council Plan Update Summary Q1 2024/25
- Appendix 3 – Corporate Performance Indicator Targets 2024/25
- Appendix 4 – PIs to be removed or amended
- Appendix 5 – Strategic Risk Register (September 2024)

15. Background Papers

Performance Management Framework – Q4 and Annual Monitoring -

The report is available here:

<https://sandwell.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s22305/Report%20-%20Performance%20Management%20Framework.pdf>

The appendices to this report are available here:

<https://sandwell.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=143&MId=6660&Ver=4>

Report to Council 21 April 2022:

[Performance Management Framework for the Council](#)